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the actual security it affords make them seek it eagerly, and in spite of the lightness with which they seem to take it no marriage can be broken without some kind of mild stir and an early effort on the part of the principals to form another alliance, while their relatives try to patch up the old one. When Chantágn only felt that she *might* lose her husband she was already at my door asking whether I would be her next. However, unstable it may be, particularly in the beginning, marriage nevertheless is one of the ideal pillars of security on which the Kaingáng personality seeks ever to support itself. They have built their society on warm personal attachments, and anyone without such attachments makes them uneasy and perplexed. No one is spoken of more sadly than a mature person who is alone. "For a long time," said Vomblé sadly, "my father wandered around all over without a wife. At last when his brother died he married his wives." The women who did not try to interest me in themselves or in their children besought me to marry someone else—anyone—and one day even Yokó, a matron who was generally too shy to speak much to me, quizzed me uncomprehendingly on my bachelorhood and advised me to marry—not so that I could have someone to cook for me and mend my clothes, but just in order to be married. "Why? Why?" she kept repeating, "why do you live thus without a wife? Get a wife." "Whom shall I marry?" said I. "Marry anybody. Why go around unmarried?" Even the children found it hard to believe that I was single and they used to question me interminably: "Have you a wife in your country?" "Have you a sweetheart in your country?" "Will you marry her when you go back?" "Do you intend to marry?"

Once a couple are married they do not drop the liaisons formed before marriage. Their long training in philandering and the absence of an ideal of faithfulness have not suited them to the stability that marriage implies. Furthermore the absence of binding legal forms or big property stakes, as well as the knowledge that a meal can always be found at one's father's or brother's fire, that one's mother or sister-in-law is ready to cook the food and spread the bed, makes marriage brittle and its rupture not sharply felt. Yet, in an utterly contradictory manner, the Kaingáng believe that a man and woman, once they are "sitting together," belong to each other, and they use the same word to designate this possession as they use for the exclusive possession of material objects. This theoretical possessiveness comes into constant conflict with the actual sharing in which the young people have taken part all their lives. The young man who for years before his marriage has dallied with the wife of anyone from his father to his second cousin, who has day in and day out enjoyed adultery with an equally delighted adulteress, decides suddenly, once he is married, that his possession should be exclusive. "I left my wife," Yuvén said to me, "because she took Kanyahé and Kundágn as lovers. She sleeps with everyone. All the women

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the little they have they do not keep for themselves, but distribute among 581
their relatives. My greatest trouble with them was that they could never 556
understand "what you want with all that stuff" that I kept for trading, nor with the wood I accumulated against the rainy season. And they have carried the same attitudes into their marital relations.

Several wives are not a mark of prestige but the result of special events. 595
Love as the nucleus of sexual relations implies loyalty in our culture, for 581
loyalty is an essential part of love. Even where marriage lacks the essence 181
but preserves the ideal it may still have a certain amount of loyalty left in it if other factors such as security and power make loyalty expedient, and early education has conditioned spouses to be loyal when they do not love. But the Kaingáng have never been educated to sexual loyalty, their *ethos* is not built on the twin columns of wealth and power, and no one starves among them as long as there is an ungnawed piece of tapir hide or a pine nut in camp. So in their informal, almost casual marriages they are not loyal to one another in the special sexual way in which we think of marriage loyalty—as an exclusive sex interest in one person. And because they are not fixated in their sexual interests and because there are no social forms and few economic considerations to stabilize marriage, it is extremely brittle until several children are born. Even then the stability that marriage achieves does not fix sexual interest.

The Kaingáng are a people with no sense of social form. As an artist 181
with a fine feeling for form will communicate that sensitivity, that sense 595
and realization of an "inner harmony," as one artist put it to me, to everything he does, a people with a feeling for or an interest in social form will do most of the things that are important to them in a highly stylized way.[12] If they are particularly interested in following lines of kinship or some other rules of organization almost everything will be done in accordance with their feelings of fitness as determined by these rules, and not a hunting party or a husking bee will be undertaken without its having been planned along the lines of this organization. If their interest runs to dancing and ceremonious display instead, they will manage to bring in dancing and ceremony on every occasion. But the Kaingáng have no interest in social forms of any kind. They have no pattern that will exclude one kind of relationship while permitting another. So their sexual relations show the same formlessness, excluding only parents and blood siblings and admitting every kind of marriage known to anthropology. The Kaingáng are not only monogamous and polygynous; but they were polyandrous too and they also established what I shall call "joint marriages" in which several men lived together with several women in mutual cohabitation. These last two types will be discussed in the following chapter.

[12] This refers, of course, to societies which are more highly structuralized.

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Analysis

628 The most striking single feature of Kaingáng disintegration is the contrast between the warm, highly affective relationships within the "families" and the uninhibited ferocity of the behavior of the members toward all outsiders. Within their own circle of relatives and companions the Kaingáng will endure a high degree of personal discomfort to avoid a quarrel, but toward "other" groups of their "own people" their overwhelming desire is to shed blood. The result of the nervous insistence on the preservation of internal peace is that serious quarrels scarcely arise, and when they do they are swiftly forgotten or their effects muted. In quarrels over adultery within the extended family the entire brunt of the squabble is usually shifted on to the shoulders of the defaulting spouse, with the result that amity among the men—the very cornerstone of Kaingáng society—is preserved. But adultery by "other men" was fuel to the smoldering flames of long-cherished hate and always precipitated murder. The sexual aggressiveness of man against man never finds full expression within the family, spending itself, at the most, in secret intrigues and surreptitious "home-breaking." But with "other men" it broke out into the frank "taking away" of their women—the deliberate asking for wives who were never refused.

The taking away of wives was a kind of dangerous play indulged in by groups of "other men" when they met. The deadly consequences of such open preempting of sexual rights were known, but they never acted as deterrents. The taking away of women created an atmosphere of fearfulness that formed a perfect medium for the development of states of mind leading to murder. When the children of Wanenggló met with the children of Yokégn the children of Wanenggló took away their wives; but when they had "led them away," the children of Wanenggló feared that their victims wished to kill them to regain their wives and to wipe out the shame of the experience. The children of Yokégn really were secretly enraged and eager to kill their wives' new husbands. The two families dwelt in fear of each other, and it soon became a question only of who would be clever enough to strike the first blow. It turned out that Yokégn was the slyest and in a single night he destroyed Wanenggló and all his children. But nothing like this ever happens within the extended family, where peaceful relations have been the rule for generations.

181 627 Another aspect of this same insistence on preserving peace within the family at any cost is the reluctance to look for trouble. The Kaingáng are utterly unwilling to face a situation pregnant with conflict unless it is thrust under their noses. That is why husbands do not follow their wives around but are content to leave them in camp alone for weeks while they go hunting, and that is why when things are stolen no one prowls around

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181 627 to find who took them. Unless he is confronted with his stolen property a Kaingáng is content to murmur in secret rather than precipitate a quarrel by accusing the thief and demanding the return of the property. The same attitude leads them to make concessions rather than to back their demands with vigorous self-assertion. An aggressive individual can usually obtain his ends simply by asserting his wishes with vigor and insistence—provided he is driven to that extreme. But generally people get what they want if they ask for it, and it is only the aggressive people who ask. The rest take what they get and complain in secret if they are dissatisfied. The Kaingáng avoid any internal quarrel and run with headlong fury into an external one. They are by no means a passive, acquiescent people, but they cannot oppose self-assertion within the extended family.

One day while Chukembégn was out hunting, a few families arrived in camp, and one of them moved into Chukembégn's camp. He and his wife took this eviction without comment and simply moved into my tent. "Why do you let him put you out?" said I. "It's your camp, isn't it?" "Ah," he replied, "if I put him out there would be the deuce of a quarrel." If two self-assertive people happen to desire the same thing the Kaingáng are utterly confused, for generally that kind of situation does not arise. Before I went hunting up the river my cook asked me to get him a deer skin. As we drew near our destination a deer suddenly slipped into the river with that wild and quiet grace that is their special gift. All the Indians were caught unprepared, and before they could fire I slipped a cartridge into my rifle and shot the deer, breaking its leg. The swift current swept it downstream, and it was picked up by Ndíli and killed. In the old days the Kaingáng never used skins for anything, but now that they can sell them to the Brazilians for a few cents the Indians are eager to have them. The old pattern of gain through self-assertion still holds, and the person who gets the skin is the one who asks for it. The practice among the white Brazilians is to give the skin to the owner of the dogs that brought the animal to bay, but the Kaingáng rarely follow the Brazilians in this. Now both Ndíli and I wanted the skin, and Ndíli was a violent and aggressive person. In the past I had always given away the skins of the animals my dogs had flushed, but here was one skin I wanted. At last Chukembégn came over to me and said, "Why don't you give him that skin? He wants it." I refused to surrender. Had I not already given deer skins to Ndíli? Why shouldn't he give me this one? At last he yielded me the skin, only to steal it later.

The most striking feature of the dispute was Chukembégn's failure to understand why I should cling to the skin in the face of the obvious fact that Ndíli wanted it so badly. Another time I wanted to give the skin of a deer my dogs had flushed to the cripple they called Dung, for I felt that

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181 627 since he had clubbed the deer he should have the skin. But when I went to hand it to him, Ndíli said, "I want the skin," to which Dung replied, "He wants it; so give it to him." The willingness to yield to aggressiveness, coupled with the indifference to trouble unless it faces one squarely, operates to reduce enormously the number and severity of conflicts within the extended family.

182 152 The obsessive interest of the Kaingáng in destruction and murder was all externalized against the "other people," and it was this ability to externalize their obsession that was in part responsible for whatever coherence and security the families preserved. The overpowering urge toward destruction that manifests itself still in the wanton gashing of trees and the killing of the tiniest bird that happens to perch on a limb where stick or stone may reach it is never directed inward against the family but always outward. The function of the feuds, therefore, was twofold, for they served both to gratify the need to destroy and to direct it away from the extended family; and this duality contributed to their perpetuation.

538 152 The overwhelming bulk of Kaingáng folklore is murder stories—murder committed in every imaginable way and on all relatives except sons. Stories begin with murders committed for no reason and rehearse over and over again the whole wearisome theme of treachery and retaliation. The interest in the feuds has suffocated any other mythological theme, and instead of the elaborate variations on widespread mythological elements that are so common among many primitive peoples we find that when these elements actually do appear in Kaingáng folklore they are bare, fossilized, neglected plots which the literary imagination has never developed. The one elaborate art form that the Kaingáng have, their folklore, is overwhelmingly concerned with their own destruction.

152 Perhaps the best proof of the obsessive nature of this trait lies in a split within an extended family which occurred after the Kaingáng were localized on the reservation and which culminated in the murder of Thechá. For years the Kaingáng had committed no murder. Their vendetta enemies had been killed or driven far away, and now the group that had lived in harmony for generations was isolated from the dangers of attack and settled peacefully on the reservation. But Thechá took to saying that he wasn't afraid of anyone, and he was angry at everyone; so "since he was angry with them they became angry with him." They decided to kill him, and one of the plotters was his own first cousin, his father's sister's son, Kovĺ. Now Thechá was a most unusual Kaingáng, for he could not swim. That simplified matters, and one day when he was crossing the river with a number of people—"nine people and five women," as one informant put it—"the canoe tipped over." Nobody tipped it, for such baldness of statement would offend Kaingáng good taste, but "the canoe tipped over" and